is its *esprit de corps* as well as its degree of actual adherence to the ideals it professes.[23] The inner honor of a group, unlike that of an individual, approaches knowability, because the ideals are knowable, so that the members can accordingly evaluate those ideals in conference with one another. The inner individual honor of the members themselves, of course, remains a mystery. But outer honor demands and is determined by publicity—which is why Caesar's general Curio (himself, like Captain Nolan, soon to be a grand self-sacrifice to honor on the battlefield) sarcastically noted that shame, which ordinarily acts to preclude the commission of faults, loses power in the dark.[24] Given that phenomenon of ethical luminescence, we ought not to be surprised by the fact that outer honor of both sorts becomes expediently valuable, transformable into power, favors, goods and the like. Providential in every sense (Hesiod almost asserts its divinity),[25] it is therefore what leaders and politicians strive for—and what the people they control kill and die for. Marx's bitter judgment that labor has grown "alienated" in consequence of undergoing objectification into a monetary value irrespective of its content[26] could be equally well applied to the alienation of outer honor into the well-worn specie Shakespeare called "mouth honor." It was in recognition of the immense symbolic value of this commodity that Gandhi instructed his non-cooperators to relinquish titles, medals and honorary posts.[27] For the same reason, actresses with bedroom eyes sue for libel.

Thanks to that alienation, we cannot label outer honor good or bad without a context. It simply *is,* being as inevitably an aspect of persona as one's face. Nor can inner honor in isolation be judged *a priori.* Hitler's inner honor might well have been exemplary—which is to say, he probably acted in complete accord with his conscience. It is the radical disjunction between his outer honor (based on his actions) and posterity's conceptions of honorable behavior which causes him to be execrated.

EMERSONIANS, RAPISTS AND DAUGHTER-KILLERS

One of the many pronounced differences between urban and rural culture, or between welfare states and "less developed countries" (the current euphemism for "primitive nations") is that in the former, the social contract becomes more formalized, more systematized and hence more "objectified" in the Marxist sense. Inner honor declines to illegitimacy as an explanation for any public act. Outer honor accordingly slips part way out of individual keeping. In short, tradition—which already may well be hidebound enough—ossifies into jurisprudence. Thus in ancient Korea, property divisions harden into inherited class distinctions, under the astoundingly appropriate rubric of "bone-rank"—that is, bloodline. "Hallowed-bone," "true-bone" and six grades of "head-rank" make one's degree of outer honor inborn, biological.[28] And increasingly the citizens (especially those without sufficient bone-rank to be police chiefs and magistrates) are expected to rely on those white blood corpuscles, the gendarmes, for protection of their rights—which

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include the redress of honor. If, months after the fact, I, a citizen of a developed zone, happen to encounter my daughter's rapist, the number of things which authority will permit me to do to him is quite limited. Were I, say, a Montenegrin or an Afghan mountain man, I might be no more "free," but my choices would be very different. We shall consider this very case shortly; in the meantime, suffice it to say that the prevalence of honor's violent defense varies in direct proportion to the prevalence of vigilantism.

Who is better off, the mountain man or the urbanite? From a utilitarian point of view, we might begin to reply by asking two corollary questions: (i) Does development or its antithesis produce more rapists? and (ii) Which system of honor-defense better restores moral and emotional equilibrium to the wronged? —I cannot satisfactorily answer either of these, especially because for the record I propose the following empirical principle, which we'll call the Shepherd's Maxim: *As authority enlarges itself, its obligation to protect from violence the individuals it controls increases, and the ability of those individuals to defend themselves from violence correspondingly decreases.* [Corollary: *Because the right to self-defense remains inalienable, each of us can and should maintain a self-reliant distrust of authority.*][29] Thoreau was willing to be jailed in token of his disobedience to authority, precisely because he'd loosened (though not entirely slipped) the strands of the social contract back at Walden Pond. Was he right or wrong? His fellows—the few he had—didn't trouble to ask that question, I suspect, when they failed to follow him behind bars. Authority owned them. My hypothetical daughter's hypothetical rapist would be another sort of Thoreau—and there are far too many like him, free demons, unconstrained ghouls, human beings who've given their honor into the keeping of their desire or arrogance or Argus-eyed anger, like the most isolated bandit in protohistorical Scythia, or the man on the New York subway steps who punched me in the face because, pushed from behind by rush hour bodies, I had "crowded" him (so he explained). I would not have lost sleep, had social specialization compelled him to divorce that species of honor. By virtue of the Shepherd's Maxim, I felt less confidence in my immediate right to recourse than I would have had I been a Scythian; for where defense technicians are unavailable, citizens must defend themselves, making their own judgments of right and wrong[30]—which can inculcate exceptionality, wholeness, even wisdom in the hearts of those blessed with equal mixtures of self-reliance and consideration. Some of the most impressive men I've met have been Inuk or white Canadian old-timers, Montana sure-shots, grim, bearded Afghan headmen whose bandoliers shine with copper bullets, alert-eyed souls who've protected whom and what they love from predators, polar bears or gunship helicopters. They stand proudly alone, like Thoreau on his fern-shadowed pages, like old Spanish towns each on its hilltop, each with its castle tower looking watchfully down upon the world all around. These men, often eccentric and even strange, own a sense of themselves, which in combination with their readiness and ability to stand up for themselves renders them easily my moral supe-

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riors. When a gang of armed thugs insults, threatens or harasses someone in my sight, far too often I've slunk away in helplessness; nor can my sin be considered an uncommon one (if anything, I'm braver than my peers). The police advise me to do nothing except to telephone. I think: If I have no weapon, I have no means of persuasion. If I have a weapon, I'll either lose and be killed, or win and be jailed. —I am not what I ought to be.[31]

And yet the equation of honor and right must never be romanticized. "In Lincoln County it was necessary for every man to protect himself and assert his rights," notes the pioneer woman Lily Klasner. But perhaps they gave themselves too many rights, rendering their honor a monster. When they drank rotgut, they "became quarrelsome, and were for settling their differences with some sort of fight, using fists, knives, or shooting irons. Today, people probably fight as much as in former times but in a different way—they take their quarrels to court."[32]

Kindness proposes the following maxim: *Honor ought not to be derived from a standard which we cannot control.* While we should hold ourselves responsible for our reactions to a situation, we need not condemn or praise ourselves for the situation itself. Unfortunately, not everyone believes this. Not even I quite believe it—for, as I've said, I have looked on more than once from a distance when somebody was assaulted by superior numbers. One night in San Francisco I saw on the opposite side of Eddy Street a woman punching another woman, socking her with dull hard sounds until she fell, then kicking her in the stomach while men stood around feasting their eyes. They were the men who were always there. It was the drug dealers' corner. It was a threatening corner even by day, and I was alone. I walked on, relieved to see a police car coming. I felt dishonored then. My powerlessness made little difference. I am not sure which I would less rather have adjusted: the rule of kindness, thus making me responsible for what I couldn't help; or my feelings, thereby rendering me callous. (The seeming middle course, a passive pity, achieves all too little distance from the second.)

Here we have to do with taboos, acts and states which affect a person's perceived cleanliness or uncleanliness. Commonly (especially but not uniquely in cultures in which virginity is a prerequisite for marriage)[33] rape becomes "dishonor." "Was it my clothes I was wearing or my walk?" an American rape victim agonized later. "It *had* to be my fault; you see? I was only a child—an innocent child, but I was ashamed for a long time."[34] The rule of kindness did not prevail. A Somali rape victim said: "I was ashamed to go out with my friends that I knew, because I wasn't a virgin any more... It was as though I was dead."[35] Another American woman recalled: "They came all over me, every which way. This may sound odd to you, but for two years afterward, no matter how much I washed, I couldn't get the smell of come out of my hair."[36] In her own perception she had become literally unclean. Lawrence of Arabia never got over being captured and raped by soldiers of the Turkish governor Hajim Bey. "While I live," he wrote seven years after it happened,

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"the force of that night will lie in the agony which broke me, and made me surrender... There's not a clean human being into whose shape I would not willingly creep."[37]

When I visited Afghanistan during Brezhnev's war, I heard of families whose daughters had been raped by Soviet soldiers or their proxies. These unfortunate girls were never the same, either to themselves or to others.[38] Some were encouraged by their families to commit suicide. A few even had their throats cut by their own fathers or brothers.

"They had a list by then," said a girl I interviewed, an Afghan refugee named Anjillah. "My sister was on the list of people to be taken away. One of the people in the Khalqi Army[39] knew her [and warned her]. She didn't go out for a week. They [the ones with the list] called her. They said why didn't she come. Sometimes the Mujahadeen let her know [when she was in danger]. Behind the door a woman said: 'Don't go to school tomorrow.' My father got a letter saying: 'You have to pay ten thousand afghanis cash.' We weren't sure if it was the Mujahadeen or the government who said that. 'If you don't pay,' they said, 'we will take your daughter.' My father said to my sister: 'When you go to school, hide your face. If they see a pretty girl they will come in the night and take her away. Next day you find them dead.' The girl would kill herself or else the family would kill her."[40]

The family would kill her! This cruel and seemingly incomprehensible act can be explained, if not excused, by once again bringing to mind the fact that violence does not victimize merely the person whose body is affected. Each rapist in Afghanistan, as in classical Rome,[41] raped not only a woman but an entire family. — A white woman once told me, "If you and I get married, it's up to us how we do it. It's us getting married, not our families." But an Asian woman told me on a different occasion: "We have to do it right. 'Cause it's many people involved—your family joining with my family." The relationship between the individual and the group obviously does vary between societies. I cannot believe that the white woman wouldn't have been hurt deep in her heart to learn that her mother or sister or daughter had been raped. Nor can I believe that she would have wanted her dead.

The Afghan family, at any rate, was dishonored by rape, dishonored beyond bearing. Its moral body had been injured. Its men would not be considered men anymore if they took no revenge. (We read of an Algerian insurgent whose wife was raped by French soldiers with the words, "If you ever see your filthy husband again don't forget to tell him what we did to you." He became impotent and sleepless, and tore up his little daughter's photograph because "everything that had to do with my wife was rotten.")[42] Very often the men were unable to find and kill the rapist. So they cleansed their honor in the best way they could. Perhaps they killed the first enemy soldier or adviser they met. Perhaps they killed the victim—whether they loved her or not—or turned her out of doors, made the separation between themselves and the polluted one, just as a Japanese man might defend the luster of his

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Mechanism For Defending Honor

UNCLEANLINESS		CLEANLINESS
UNHOLINESS	⟶	HOLINESS
HUMILIATION	PURIFICATION	EXALTATION
FEAR		COURAGE
Perceived or actual state	*Act of Violence*	*New perceived or actual state*

Perceived state = prestige = public or collective honor.
Actual state = self-evaluated or inner (individual) honor.

family by divorcing his wife if her brother married somebody from an Untouchable family.[43] I look into the eyes of the Afghan insurgents in my old photographs and see resolution, heroic outer honor tranquil or happy or ruthless, guns pointed at the sky; I remember the individual sounds of their voices and of their footsteps on the trail, and the steadiness of their purpose, the enviable sense they radiated that they were completely in the right—and they were. Were any of these men, whose photographed features I have stared at now for far, far longer than their living faces, ever implicated in an honor murder? Would I be better off if I didn't think so? Such generous valor as they had, such readiness to spend themselves for Allah and honor, was it the same thing that might have led some of them to spend others?

In a small survey conducted among Indian Muslims in the early 1990s, the hypothetical question was asked: Where lay honor and justice if a Muslim girl were caught going to the movies with a Hindu boy? "Almost a third of the respondents would have the girl killed, expecting the parents to quietly poison her, bury her alive, or themselves commit suicide." (In actual fact, the interviewer remarks, they would probably confine themselves to beating the girl instead of slaughtering her. In violence as in charity, we often fall short of our own expectations.)[44] —Oh, those barbaric Asians! —We see an American photograph of a pale, grimacing little corpse, multiply grinning with now bloodless stab wounds, from one of which the herniated intestine protrudes like a roasted chestnut. The panicked young mother had done execution with her Boy Scout knife and hid the baby in the clothes hamper. She later received probation for manslaughter.[45] The forensic pathologist explains that "the social stigma attached to pregnancy out of wedlock is probably the single most common motivating force for killing a neonate. However, the crime is not limited to the unmarried."[46] Because inner honor is unknowable to the sharpest-sighted seer of souls, the same objective circumstances may impel the same act of violence, with the same objective result—but for different reasons, and with varying *inner* results. Thus an unwed mother who commits infanticide may do so in

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order to defend her outer honor by destroying the evidence which would cause her to lose prestige,[47] or to purify her inner honor by ending an unclean attachment (for example, if the baby were a rape-child). Does the latter sound far-fetched? Only if you have forgotten all but instrumentality. "Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open," writes Thoreau. "By turns our purity inspires, and our impurity casts us down."[48] Many consider the act of defecation to be unclean; we prefer not to witness it, or be witnessed at it; we ease ourselves and send away the matter and stench, then return to cleanliness. The act had no consequence; it is as if it didn't happen. But if it really had no consequence, why were we ashamed to be seen? So, perhaps, with infanticide. The act by which the baby was conceived was pleasant—or not—and then it was over—only not over, because the belly swelled. Make the matter within the belly disappear, and both inner and outer honor may be satisfied. An unmarried Yemenite girl gives birth. Presenting her with a knife, her mother says, "You brought this on; you will get rid of it."[49] A Spartan woman, "when she saw her son approaching, asked how their country was doing. When he said: 'all the men are dead,' she picked up a tile, threw it at him and killed him, saying: 'Then did they send you to bring us the bad news?'"[50]

Outer honor proclaims that I am pure if others think me so. Inner honor, weak and uneasy, would gladly be persuaded by outer honor.[51] —And what if the evidence has already been seen? Chairman Mao's doctor describes a cuckolded husband who tried to commit suicide by swallowing mercury from a thermometer: "His most serious injury was his loss of face."[52] —Why was his "face" so important? Well, outer honor, in proportion to its value, may itself become a defense, a suit of gilded armor whose dazzling skin protects the self from certain kinds of violence. If I am a cuckold and do nothing about it, people may say, "he's a pushover; we can do whatever we want to this one"—a reason for honor's defense which we'll see time and time again. How can I un-cuckold myself? Kill the seducer or my wife (the Afghan solution), or kill myself; or divorce my wife. —The best, of course, would have been if my outer honor had never been questioned. That's why so many cuckolds bite their lip and endure. *Outer honor gives security.* The citizen of the ancient Greek polis—and, until the middle centuries of the Empire, this went for Romans, too—lived legally immune from being put to the question on any suspicion of crime, and, indeed, could demand the torture of almost any slave to exonerate himself from such suspicion. While there were boundaries beyond which it grew unwise to test this immunity—high treason against the king or emperor, for instance—still, as a rule, one's oath as a citizen was acceptable as testimony because the status of citizenship was *honorable.* (By the same token, one did not want to live without honor; one would be literally disenfranchised, exiled at best. The suit of armor would then be stripped away, replaced by a mere golden standard waving high above the despised one who, weaponless or not, must lay about him in the various battles of politics and life.) In practice, this supposition of integrity meant not that a citizen's oath-sworn words

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were infallibly true—the ancients were not stupid—but rather, that there was no point in asking a citizen for forensic proof: go stretch my slave instead, and break *his* bones! (He's not honorable.) —The cuckolded member of Mao's entourage and the American mother who stabbed her baby resembled ostracized Greeks desperate to return to the fold. As for the Afghan families of raped women, they were wounded and soiled, unable to cleanse the festering gashes in their inner and outer collective honor except by blood.

DEFENSE OF MONUMENTS

Such needs for redress may well atomize a soul torn by rage, shame, love and desperate grief—or a society, as exemplified by the gang warfare which corroded so many American cities in the late twentieth century, the stakes being defense of race, ground, money and honor. The prestige contests which permeated Powhatan Indian society three hundred years prior[53] must have likewise disseminated anxiety and vindictiveness—as was certainly the case eight centuries before that when Julius Caesar launched a civil war against Pompey on the explicit grounds of outer honor.[54] "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher.[55] Vanity can be poison! Nonetheless, vanity's proven convenient in politics, as this diagram suggests. *(See next page.)*

Well-meaning Plato, like the "hidden persuaders" of consumer society,[56] advises his autocrat to control the ideal city by using the twin reins of public credit and discredit[57]—in other words, outer honor and dishonor. These then will be the reins, but toward what should society be steered? Will it be "honorable"? Of course wealth alone ought not to be renowned, or even goodness without temperance; so Plato insists, but, like other technicians, he offers a means, but cannot control how that means is used. In the case of those mass practitioners of violence called armies, the means becomes more potent, the end conveniently blank. Clausewitz, for instance, that famous or infamous military theorist, sees courage (Captain Nolan's honor)[58] as a kind of job description for a soldier.[59] The great Sun-tzu, leader of soldiers, is more bald about it. After all, his end has already been defined: victory pure and simple. How could his Chinese warlord clients not approve of that? "Eliminate doubt," he instructs, "so that they will die without other thought."[60] —Die, yes—and kill. That constitutes bravery, I presume. Twenty-two centuries after Sun-tzu has issued that advice, a Japanese candidate officer is given a "trial of courage"—to behead a starved Chinese POW with his sword. "I didn't want to disgrace myself," he recalls. "I bowed to the regimental commander and stepped forward." Soon enough he is ordering his conscripts to bayonet Chinese prisoners as a training exercise. "We kicked them and made them do it. After that, a man could do anything easily."[61] —Eliminate doubt. Honorableness wipes away doubt, as well as the need to think.[62] Blow yourself up before you surrender. Shoot your comrades if they try to surrender.[63] Become a kamikaze, and take off at dawn, while the schoolgirls below you

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